Reviewer's report

Title: Paediatricians' perspectives on global health priorities for newborn care in a developing country: a national survey

Version: 1 Date: 19 April 2012

Reviewer: Scott Lorch

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
3. Are the data sound?
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
9. Is the writing acceptable?

Please make your review as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Overall impressions:

1. The question of the manuscript is well defined.
2. The methods are described well as to how the survey was conducted and physicians recruited. Some more information on the survey; its validity; and methods for reporting information from the free text section will be helpful.
3. Data results are appropriate, with some need for error bars around each data point in the 2 figures.
4: The manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

5/6: Conclusions/discussion well balanced, especially in regards to how the differences in perceptions about the problem of jaundice

7: Some more background is needed in regards to previous work in this topic; the role that physician surveys play in driving change in physician practice; and some of the data that underlie the hypotheses introduced in the background section.

8/9: The title, abstract, and writing is acceptable.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods:
   1. Results/Discussion: information on the comparability of the respondents to the pediatricians in Nigeria, and to the overall characteristics of the Paediatric Association of Nigeria (PAN) is needed to help determine the generalizability of these data.
   2. Results/Methods: Information presented in Table 2 that show differences between respondent characteristics should (1) introduced in the methods section, as no information on these characteristics or why they are chosen is presented here; and (2) presented as a table for ease of reading. The text then can point out interesting comparisons as mentioned already.
   3. Figures need to show some sort of error term; if the authors stay with mean values, then standard deviations should be shown, otherwise other methods of presenting the distribution of data can be used.
   4. Methods: Statistical testing would be helpful to show differences between the overall rank-orders for the groups. A comment such as the following on page 6 (“The differences in mean ranks by all respondents for all the conditions were significant…across all four measures.”) are too broad and, without more information, may not be appropriate as, say, for example the difference in admissions between prematurity, birth asphyxia, and sepsis (Figure 1).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Methods: It would be helpful to have more information on how the questions were validated, and to ensure that respondents perceived the conditions similarly. For example, “congenital abnormalities” can range from minor conditions such as polydactyly that have no real impact on quality of life or activities of daily living, to conditions that result in severe mortality or morbidity.

2. Methods: this applies mostly to presentation of the data. The use of the Mann-Whitney U test and the Friedman non-parametric test are totally appropriate; however, they do not test the difference in mean values, but rather the difference in rank order or medians. Data presented in regards to figures 1 and 2 should report medians and interquartile ranges, which the p-values represent the differences, rather than means and standard deviations.

3. Methods/results: If information from the free text section are presented, then the paper should describe how those quotations were pulled from the section and
why they were chosen. Formal qualitative methods are available to ensure no bias in the choice/use of these comments.

Discretionary Revision

1. Background: Some more information could be added to the paper in regards to how information from the physician community in the developing world could change policy, either at the local or national levels.

2. It may help readers not from Nigeria to understand the distribution of physicians/patients throughout the country, and the typical practice location for physicians within the country.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.